Role of Bhartiya Janata Party in the Electoral Politics of India Since 1980

A Synopsis

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the Synopsis entitled **“** Role of Bhartiya Janata Party in the Electoral Politics of India Since 1980” submitted for the award of Ph. D degree in Political Science is my original work and the Title of the Synopsis has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, associateship, fellowship or any other similar titles.

Patiala **Signature of the Student**

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Statement of the Problem

The Bhartiya Janata Party is the successor to the Bhartiya Jana Sangh which came into existence in 1951under the leadership of Shyama Prasad Mukerjee. In fact it was the organization of the Rashtriya Swayam Sangh which believed in the ideal of "one country, one culture and one Bhartiya nation." It did not do well in the first two general elections but the third and fourth General Election had raised the stature of the Party and its voice counted both in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislatures. In early 1956, abortive attempts were made to merge the Jana Sangh, Ram Rajya Parishad and the Hindu Mahasabha into a single party, but the talks did not succeed. After the State of Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi in 1977, the Jana Sangh merged with several other parties to form the Janata Party; it defeated the incumbent Congress party in the 1977 General election. After remaining in power for three years, the Janata Party was dissolved in 1980. In 1980, the remnants of the former Bharatiya Jan Sangh (BJS) party formed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a party with a Hindu nationalist bent. In the 1984 Lok Sabha election the BJP could only muster two seats in the Lok Sabha; in the following election in 1989, the BJP grew in strength by mustering eighty-five seats.

Soon after its founding, the BJP exploited the religious sentiments among the Hindus and the Muslims. A mosque in the city of Ayodhya became a lightning rod for religious tensions between the Hindus and the Muslims. The mosque, according to Hindus, built on the site where a former Hindu temple once stood. For this reason, Hindus sought to pull down the structure of mosque and build a Hindu temple for one of its Hindu gods, Lord Rama. The BJP, realizing its significance, exploited the Ayodhya issue to the fullest and ratcheted-up the party's Hindu nationalist rhetoric. BJP's Hindu nationalist card helped the BJP in expanding its seat number in the parliament from 2 in 1984 to 120 in 1991. With the demolition of the Ayodhya mosque in 1992 by Hindu nationalists, religious tensions, in the

context of electoral politics, became less salient of an issue for the electorate, and the BJP responded accordingly by toning down its Hindu nationalist rhetoric in the run up to the 1996 national election. Following victories in several state elections and better performances in national elections, the BJP became the largest party in the parliament in 1996; however, it lacked a majority in the lower house of Parliament, and its government lasted only 13 days.

For the first time in Indian parliamentary history under the leadership of BJP, general elections were held in September-October 1999. In this elections BJP-led NDA secured a victory and formed a coalition government on 13 October, 1999 under the Premiership of Atal Behari Vajpayee. Before the composition of National Democratic Alliance BJP for the sake of political stability abandoned controversial issues of Ram Mandir, abolition of Article 370 in Indian constitution and uniform civil code to form an appropriate alliance with regional parties, on launching the National Agenda for Governance (NAG).[1]

The BJP's rise to prominence had been the defining feature of Indian politics over the last two decades. The BJP has emerged as the single dominant party in the last three parliamentary elections of 1996, 1998 and 1999 in a row since 1984, though it was not yet an all-India party. The BJP had learnt through its own experience of running the 13 days Vajpayee government in 1996 that remaining in splendid isolation with its own ideology could take it anywhere. In 1996 elections BJP had four electoral parties which stood by it in the 1996 poll-the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, Akali Dal in Punjab, Haryana Vikas Party in Haryana, and Samata Party in Bihar. In 1998 mid-term BJP's alliance strength touched the figure of 13, and run first coalition government of 13 months under the leadership of Vajpayee.[2] Vajpayee has the chrisma to run a coalition government of 24 parties was a long March (1998-2004).

The National Democratic Alliance government under the leadership of Atal Behari Vajpayee completed its full term of five years, and it became the first non-congress government at centre which complete its full term. These five years had seen India on the move' with unique achievements and path breaking initiatives in all the three critical areas of national building. Democracy, development and
security, political stability, booming economy social peace, bold moves to resolve contentious issues. The Vajpayee led NDA government 'achievements was strengthening national security, countering cross border terrorism, fortifying national unity, setting India on the path of high socio-economic growth, making development the national mantra, and raising India's image and standing in the international community had created a surge of hope and national pride.

The political stability and national building were the land mark achievements of the NDA government during 1999-2004. In this period the centre state relations had became more harmonious then at any time in recent decades. Unlike the earlier coalitions, the NDA was successful in a variety of ways not only had it completed its full tenure for which it was re-elected in 1999 general elections, but the alliance of 24 parties it forged was relatively stable and posed no threat to the continuity of the government in power. But NDA failed to won the 2004 general elections, on the stunning defeat of BJP-led NDA Advani admitted that the 'Feel Good' and India shinning, campaigns hurt the BJP, and the BJP's dismal performance that it was the result *of* anti- incumbency.
. It need not be forgotten that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was comprehensively defeated in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections because of its pro-rich and anti poor economic politics. In 2004 general elections the NDA should reflect on four political miscalculations, such as, calling early elections; arrogance with allies, DMK, INLD, AGP, Paswan, they have been guided mostly

by local factors otherwise NDA's tally would have gone up by 40-50, that would have been a winning difference; turning the elections into a referendum on leadership.

Atal Behari Vajpayee India's most voted on local regional issues even in the national election, and lastly. Related to the third campaigning on a pan-Indian issue, like economic development and economic potential to a fractured electorate. The NDA, in 14th Lok Sabha as responsible opposition's took up the issue of 'tainted' ministers and wanted them to remove from the 'council of ministers' led by Manmohan Singh.

Barring a hic-cup or two, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party chief Amit Shah, had been winning election after election since its 2014 Lok Sabha poll win. After the historic victory, the BJP won assembly elections in Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur and Uttar Pradesh. In Haryana, Assam and Uttar Pradesh, the BJP formed governments on its own while in Jammu and Kashmir it tasted power for the first time with the state's Peoples Democratic Party. In Manipur also, the party formed its government with the help of some junior allies. However, the BJP lost heavily in Delhi in 2015 against Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party and in Bihar against Nitish Kumar-led Grand Alliance of Janata Dal-United, Rashtriya Janata Dal and Congress. That it managed to break the alliance and formed the government with Nitish Kumar is a different story. In the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, it was the first time in the 67-year history of independent India that a non-Congress party won a simple majority on its own. The author described in detail how the BJP transformed itself into a more inclusive Hindu party, open to all castes, which led to its victory in Uttar Pradesh despite the risky decision of demonetisation. On the future of the BJP, the author explained how "Modi's mass charisma and Shah's tremendous organisational skills together laid

the foundations for the new BJP in the middle of its most ambitious experiment of social engineering". Apart from these two main factors, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) the BJP's mentor supplemented and contributed to its phenomenal success.

In the General elections held in 2019, the Bhartiya Janata Party won 303 seats, further increasing its substantial majority and the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance won 353 seats. The Indian National Congress party won 52 seats, and the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance won 91. Other parties and their alliances won 98 seats. The Indian National Congress again failed to secure the requisite 10 percent of the seats in the Lok Sabha and hence India remains without an official opposition party. With the results, the BJP was able to gain 21 seats in the House, having won 282 in the 2014 general elections. It was the second time in India's independent history that voters re-elected the same party to power with a bigger majority to the Lok Sabha – India's lower house of parliament. The BJP's total vote share stood at 37.4 per cent, an increase of over 6 percentage points from 31.34 per cent in 2014. The election had been called a referendum on Modi and the BJP's Hindu Nationalistic policies and advocacy. Until 2019, West Bengal, Odisha and the eight north-eastern states, like the south, was largely untouched by the BJP. In the east, of the 88 seats on offer in the region, the BJP won 40 seats. The BJP’s performance in West Bengal was remarkable where it bagged 18 seats out of 42 as against 2 in 2014. It is interesting to note that the BJP bagged all the seats in 14 states. In

Justification of the Study

The establishment of regional political parties in 1980 marked the transition from the traditional class politics to the democratic politics. The victory of the Congress party in 1980 and 1984 elections proved that the Congress would remain as a dominant party in Indian politics but the elections in 1989 disapproved the statement when the Congress lost power and National Front government was formed with the outside support of the BJP and the left parties. The 2014 election results signaled a transition towards a new phase of BJP dominant party system. Ever since the Congress party government of Rajiv Gandhi was defeated, for the first time, a single party majority government has come into power. The main opposition of the BJP, the Congress finds itself hopelessly marginalized and demoralized. Thus, the outcome of the general elections of the 2014 has ushered a new phase of Indian politics and after the parliamentary elections , all the Assembly elections had BJP as the central factor. The BJP already a major player is looking forward to gain power on its own. The BJP now not only control the central government but also ruling in 21 of the 31 states and union territories , either on its own or with the alliance partners . Thus, expanding iys wings to the regions and states where it was never in power before. Keeping in view these developments the researcher has taken the topic Role of Bhartiya Janata Party in the Electoral Politics of India Since 1980 for research.

Review of Literature

Some of the important literature relevant to the study has been reviewed as follows:

Suhas Palshkar (ed.) (2017)[3] opined that the general elections held in 2014 in India, the largest democracy in the world to elect the 16th Lok Sabha brought in dramatic results. This important volume explained not only the startling victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) but also the equally surprising downfall of the Congress Party. It examined not why BJP won and the Congress lost, but why the scale of BJP's victory and that of Congress's defeat was so very different from the results in the years 2004 and 2009. The author presented an in-depth analysis of the electoral results, state-wise studies, the factors leading up to these outcomes, and the road India has travelled since then. With contributions from India's leading political scientists, psephologists, sociologists and political commentators, this book will be of great interest to scholars and researchers of Indian politics, democracy and political parties, as well as South Asian studies.

Dibeysh Anand (2011)[4] noted that the different shades of extremism or moderation, Hindu nationalists saw the Hindu nation as equivalent to India. There was no aspect of Indian nationalism that could be credited to non-Hindus. Non-Hindus could occupy the position of a marginal guest of the Indian/Hindu nation forever grateful to the Hindus for their magnanimous hospitality or be the disloyal subjects of the Indian state doomed to be outside the Indian nationhood. At best, individual non-Hindus could, in theory, go against their own religionists and prove their loyalty to India. But most of the time, they would remain peripheral or a hurdle to the national project. The existence of Muslims was taken as a malady for the national project. Therefore, their inclusion in the society, according to the Hindutva forces, would hamper the development of the nation imagined by them. It was shown with some empirical data that how the underrepresentation of Muslims in the state machinery was a result of the prejudice and the pressure exerted by the

majority community. These examples of apathy towards Muslins found their roots in the ideology that guides the BJP-led national government in India.

Henrik Berglund (2004)[5] examined the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as one of the dominant forces within Indian politics. The ideology of the party was analyzed as a form of religious nationalism, with possible strains in its relation to the religious minorities of India. The author focused on the position of the Muslim minority and analyzed the position of the BJP in relation to two issues with major importance within Indian politics: Uniform Civil Code - Shah Bano case and controversy in Ayodhya. Both issues had been studied on a national level and in a local study conducted in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. On a theoretical level the author drew upon the discourse of nationalism theory. He also discussed the position of the BJP on minority versus majority rights in relation to the debate between liberals and communitarians, where the latter was a reaction against the liberal ideal of a neutral state, instead suggesting a political theory based on the specific values and traditions of each community. The party's position in the Shah Bano case and the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhoomi controversy was best described as mono-communitarian, emphasizing Hindu supremacy at the expense of minority rights.

Sunil Kumar (2001)[6] had comprehensively analysed the ideology, organisation, leadership, electoral base and also the hindutva doctrine of BJP within the broader connotation of communal and secular politics in the Indian political system. The author had thrown extensive light on various developments in the genesis of the party right from its inception in 1980, till date. He also stressed on the paradox of Indian political system where the state is secular, but politics has become communal. The external as well as the internal shortcomings of the Bhartiya Janata Party had also been discussed."

Mauli Dey (2014)[7] in his article stated that although the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) may appear to be 'accomodative' in rhetoric, in reality and action it still remained communal. It had failed to shed off its orthodox Hindu fundamentalist ideas. Several instances during the campaign for the Lok Sabha elections 2014 bear testimony. The party still remains steeped in the ideology of *Hindutva* and Hindu nationalism. This was evident in its series of inflammatory and provocative hate speeches given during the campaign for the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections 2014. The gesture of tolerance towards the Muslims lacked credibility. The manifesto of the BJP still echoed the desire of the party to walk on the line of *mandir—masjid* politics when it expressed its desire to construct the Ram temple in the disputed site of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh. The party that was vowing in the name of 'development' and 'good governance' had nothing to offer with regard to Muslim empowerment. Neither does the manifesto clearly spell out how the party sought to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of the Muslim community. The BJP, with all its pro-Hindu and anti-minority stances, will only jeopardise its political position in the electoral map of the country and may find itself deserted by the disadvantageous sections of the society. Although the BJP had promised a strong, decisive leadership and high economic growth, it was still oscillating between the *Hindutva* ideology and a modern vision for itself and the nation. The political success of the Bharatiya Janata Party and Modi in the coming days depends largely in their ability to deliver as promised.

Anuj Nadadur (2006)[8]had argued that the reasons behind the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) rise to national prominence in India during the 1990's could be traced to the growing insecurity that the Hindu majority experienced during this period because changing conditions on the ground made it appear as if the nation was being controlled by the Muslim minority. The BJP played on this perception and

mobilized politically, asserting that the increasing power of the minority necessitated solidarity in India's Hindu population. The author had analysed the reasons behind the Hindu perception of the Muslim threat
such as the 1980's and 1990's marked a unique period in India during
which it appeared that Muslims were gaining in prominence and exerting a disproportionately large influence in Indian affairs. Underlying this belief was the changing demographics of the Muslim population, the growth of Islamic extremism, and the increased importance of the 'Muslim' vote to electoral outcomes. These factors paved the way for the BJP to enter the political sphere and work with the Sangh Parivar to use the media to play on Hindu insecurity. He also examined the means that the BJP employed to play on the fears of the Hindu majority. In concluding remarks, the author distilled lessons from the BJP's rise in the 1990's and argued that in the future, the BJP will have difficulty returning to power on a purely Hindu nationalist platform because the perceived threat from Muslims was no longer as prevalent as it was during the 1990's. The future of the BJP as a viable second national political party, thus, lies in a moderate stance. It should emphasize its economic, domestic, and foreign policies as well as its ability to address those areas where the Congress Party has failed.

Chandra Prakash Bhambhri (2000)[9] opined that the Vajpayee-led Coalition Government took decisions which attracted global and domestic criticism. The nuclearisaion of India and the targetting of Christian minority created international and internal controversies regarding the functioning of the first BJP-led Coalition Government. Since the coalition was unstable the BJP cleverly pursued its agenda of Hindutva while public attention remained focussed on conflicts amount the coalition partners of the Central Government of India. This first government led by the forces of Hindutva remained in power for thirteen months and during this period every group of the hindutva felt free to pursue the goal of promotion of

Hindutva. During its six months of temporary rule after its defeat in the Lok Sabha by one vote, Vajpayee-led Government projected itself as the defender of India against aggressive Pakistan. This was a critical study of Pokhran II to Kargil of the first Vajpayee led Coalition Government whose decisions which attracted global & domestic attention with raised eyes. The author focuses an important phase of political process of India during BJP-led governmemt leading to 13th Lok Sabha Elections.

O. P. Gupta (2004)[10] stated that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, was originally formed in 1998. It again came to power in 1999 and remained in office at the Centre till May 13, 2004. Following the defeat of the NDA at the Lok Sabha elections, a new Congress-led United Progressive Alliance had come to power with the eminent economist, Dr. Manmohan Singh, as the Prime Minister. The Vajpayee government took some bold strides after assuming office. Its governance was marked by emphasis on the nation's development and security. Its policy of liberalisation and disinvestment and privatisation, and promotion of Information Technology, gave a boost to the economy and Indians started feeling like active partners in a globalised set-up. The success of the Kargil confrontation with Pakistan and the nuclear initiative brought laurels for the government. But the Vajpayee government had its own flaws and weaknesses. According to the author, the NDA government communalised the polity and sought to destroy the social fabric of the country. Farmers were neglected, women were marginalised and huge unemployment alienated the youth. The many scams, particularly in the Defence sector, alleged corruption in certain deals connected with the disinvestment and privatisation process and to a great extent, the ghastly Gujarat riots, brought bad name to the Vajpayee government leading to its ultimate collapse.

Sanjay Kumar and Annapurna Nautiyal (2004)[11] conducted a study on the 2004 Lok Sabha election of the state of Uttaranchal. A sample of 490 was drawn using the multistage stratified random sampling method. They observed that the Congress Party and the BJP had been the two main contesting parties in the election. There had been a close contest between the winning party and loosing party with just 2 percentage of point's variation. The authors found that both the parties had traditional supporters more or less in equal proportions. BJP had 91 per cent of traditional supporters and Congress had 85 per cent. After analysising the political preference on the basis of caste, gender, and level of educations t\he authors concluded that though caste based politics prevailed in Uttaranchal, people preferred to support and vote on the basis of the performance of the candidate as well as of the government. It was also found by them that election campaign had also showed its influence to determine the support of the people in elections. Sanjay Lodha (2009) [12] conducted a study on 2009 Lok Sabha elections held in Rajasthan. A sample of 1,214 was drawn using the multistage stratified random sampling method. The author observed that in a state marked by bipolar electoral contests, two factors which made both the India National Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party un-comfortable during the 2009 Lok Sabha elections were the impact of delimitation and low turnout of voters. In this election the Congress won 20 seats out of 25 Lok Sabha seats, with 48.4 per cent vote share and the BJP won 4 seats with 36.6 per cent of vote share while the BSP won only one seat with 3.4 per cent of vote share. The author found that there were three factors responsible for the Congress party's victory in Rajasthan which were, firstly, performance of the United Progressive Alliance government in the Centre under the stewardship of Monmohan Singh, secondly, sustained campaigning by State Congress leadership, and thirdly serious infighting and factionalism within the BJP.

Chris Ogden (2018)[13] stated that the overwhelming general election triumph of the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) in May 2014 heralded a remarkable and seismic event in India's electoral history. The party's ascent to power was the first outright majority victory since that of Rajiv Gandhi in 1984. "The difference between Modi and his predecessors was a matter of energy and style," which would produce clear changes concerning how India's ruling party would approach, perform, and delineate its governance. In his article highlighted the dominant aims of the current BJP government concerning India's foreign policy. Using a constructivist- centered and discourse-orientated approach, it distilled the three prevailing strategic goals integral to the Narendra Modi-led regime, namely gaining great power recognition; realizing a multipolar world order; and enacting the "Act East" policy. The study found that, although proof of a prevailing "Modi Doctrine" is scarce, the presence of these three aims was notably consistent and prevalent within official discourses and scholarly accounts of the foreign policy preferences of the second NDA. Their repetition and reiteration constituted evidence of both a significant *acceleration* and a noteworthy *tone shift* concerning how Indian foreign policy had been conceptualized and conducted since 2014.

Yatindra Singh Sisodia and Ram Shankar (2009)[14] conducted a study on 2009 Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh on the basis of a sample was drawn using the multi-stage stratified random sampling method. In that elections the Congress won 12 seats while the BJP won 16 out of the total 29 Lok Sabha seats. The BSP (Bahujan Samaj Party) contested in 28 seats but won only one seat, while the Samajvadi Party (SP) drew blank. Though four major contenders were there in the contest, the major competition was only between the BJP and the Congress.

The authors found that the BJP gained much of its support from the OBC's (46 per cent) and upper castes (51 per cent) while the Congress was supported more by STs

(50 per cent). Among Scheduled Castes 40 per cent had voted for the Congress and 36 per cent voted for the BJP, while only 16 per cent supported the BSP. The authors concluded that the policies and programmes of the BJP government played a decisive role in determining the preferences in the poll, rather than caste wise polarization. However, the most popular schemes of central government had their popular influence on the voters in rural areas which had significantly worked for the UP A.

Ramashray Roy and Paul Wallace (eds.) (1999)[15] dealt with 12th Lok Sabha elections and analysis of the electoral verdict. The authors had elaborately cited cases to prove that how regional political parties were responsible for the collapse of BJP government. The BJP led coalition government collapsed by a narrow margin of one vote 270-269. J. Jayalalitha withdrew the support of her 18 members ; Mayawati announced that her five members would abstain from the House but she betrayed the BJP led coalition by casting vote against the government and the government only lasted for 13 months. The authors demonstrated that coalition experiment in the Indian politics was not successful. The Congress leadership tried to provide an alternative government but did not succeed. V.P. Singh led Janata Dal, BJP-led coalition and Congress led minority government of P.V. Narsinhma Rao 1991-96, all were unsuccessful efforts of running the coalition governments.

Christophe Jaffrelot (1998)[16] had given a detailed account of the Hindu nationalist movement in India since the 1920s arguing that political uneasiness, created by real and imagined threats of colonialism and the presence of minority groups, paved the way for militant Hinduism on the Indian subcontinent. Although the peaceful, inward-looking doctrine of the Hindu religion hardly seems to lend itself to ethnic nationalism, a phenomenal surge of militant Hinduism has taken place over the last

ten years in India, precipitating a wave of Hindu-Muslim riots in India in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Indeed, the electoral success of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had proven beyond a doubt that these fundamentalists now pose a significant threat to India's secular government. The author had explored how rapid changes in the political, social, and economic climate have made India fertile soil for the growth of the primary arm of Hindu nationalism, a paramilitary-style group known as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), together with its political offshoots. He argued that political uneasiness, created by real and imagined threats of colonialism and the presence of minority groups, paved the way for militant Hinduism on the Indian subcontinent. He showed how the Hindu movement uses religion to enter the political sphere, and argued that the ideology they speak for has less to do with Hindu philosophy than with ethnic nationalism, borrowing from modern European models. Using techniques similar to those of nationalist groups in other nations, Jaffrelot contended, the Hindu movement polarizes Indian society by stigmatizing minorities - chiefly Muslims and Christians - and by promoting a sectarian Hindu identity. His close empirical research informed his case studies of party-building at the local level and strengthened his incisive interpretations of the past failures and Hindu nationalism, as well as recent successes beginning in the 1980s. This analysis took into account the subtle interaction between long-term strategies for changing a country's culture and short-term tactics of political accommodation.

P.S. Verma (1999)[17] in his article tried to prove that every government had to prove its worth and the people do evaluate the performance of the ruling party. In 1997 Assembly elections and in 1998 mid-term Lok Sabha polls the Congress presented a dismal picture as the peace card had failed to help the Congress for long. The

main reasons of the Congress failure were corruption, nepotism, infighting, police atrocities and frequent abuse of power. In Parliamentary elections 1999, the turnout was low particularly in the urban areas as the urban voters had got alienated from the ruling Akali-BJP combine. Even some traditional Akali voters did not support the party whole heartedly and the Congress improved its position by winning 8 seats and its ally CPI one seat. The ruling combine could retain only 3 seats and that too with slander margins. The Congress focused mainly on the non-performance of the government. They lamented Akali Dal –BJP misrule, corruption, price rise, power shortage, defective procurement system, nepotism, unemployment etc. It showed that non-performance can prove disastrous for any political party.

Satish Misra (2018)[18] observed that in five years since 2013, when Narendra Modi was declared its prime ministerial candidate, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had managed to widen its geographical reach and strengthen its electoral and political supremacy across the
country. By May 2018, the BJP, either on its own strength or with its alliance partners, was ruling in 21 of the 31 states and union territories, expanding to the regions and states where it was never in power before.
Today, the BJP is the most dominant political party in India. In the 1984 elections, the BJP won only two Lok Sabha seats, provoking serious introspection within the party and its ideological parent, the Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangha. The party then decided to abandon the ideals of positive secularism and Gandhian socialism that it had adopted in its inception in 1980. In the late 1980s and the 1990s, the BJP went back to the Hindutva ideology of its precursor, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh (BJS).

The BJP's rise to power can be attributed partly to Advani's organisational skills, as well as the party's return to the Hindutva agenda while keeping the liberal image of Vajpayee alive in popular memory. What further helped the party was the fact that the electorate wanted a
change from the long years of Congress rule. A little over six years of the Vajpayee government, between 1998 and 2004, established the party
as a credible alternative to the Congress. However, the BJP-led NDA lost the next two general elections due to various factors, making
way for a Congress-led coalition, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), to run the government until a series of scams, high inflation and unemployment and policy paralysis grounded it in the 2014 elections. This time, the BJP was led by Modi, a four-time chief minister of Gujarat and the party's prime ministerial candidate. He managed to capitalize on the popular discontent against the UPA government and won the party a majority, on its own, in Lok Sabha. There is hardly any doubt that the BJP has transformed itself in a period of five years, evolving into an almost unrecognizable political machine. The party's rapid expansion, resulting in its current pan-India presence, has also brought in a new set of challenges. It remains to be seen whether changes brought in by the Modi-Shah leadership that have helped the party achieve its pan-India presence will continue to be the norm in the years to come.

Katharine Adeney and Lawrence Saez (2005)[19] examined the emergence of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India and the ways in which its Hindu nationalist agenda had been affected by the constraints of being a dominant member of a coalition government. The authors studied whether Hindu nationalism had sparked a major change in Indian society and government. It revolved around the rise of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and an affiliated Shiv Sena party. Both espouse Hindusatva, a nationalistic creed centred on an exclusionary view of Hinduism.

There was a look into the development of Hindu nationalism during the colonial period. How this differed from the secular nationalism of Nehru and Gandhi. Religious influence in contemporary politics offers a fertile ground for political-sociological analysis, especially in societies where religion was a very important source of collective identity. In South Asian societies religion could, and often had, provided legitimacy to both governments and those who oppose them. The aithors examined the emergence of the BJP and the ways in which its Hindu nationalist agenda had been affected by the constraints of being a dominant member of a coalition government. The collected authors took stock of the party's first full term in power, presiding over the diverse forces of the governing NDA coalition, and the 2004 elections. They assessed the BJP's performance in relation to its stated goals, and more specifically how it had fared in a range of policy fields - centre-state relations, foreign policy, defence policies, the 'second generation' of economic reforms, initiatives to curb corruption and the fate of minorities. The authors asked if the ability of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to finish a full term in federal rule is emblematic of more profound changes.

G.N. S. Raghavan and Chari Seshadri (1996)[20] portrayed former Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee in full sagacity and celebrates in Indian politics as, a revival of these political values, which festered peoples, aspiration during freedom struggle and were needed after independence to the devastated and poor sail of India. With features like BJP's rise with him, BJP’s vision of social equality and harmony and non-appeasement, economics of mutual sharing, Autyodaya and swadeshi, a benchmark.

Rajat Sethi and Shubhrastha (2017)[21] had given a rare insight to the historical aspect of the last battle of Saraighat in the present context of Assam and how important the election of 2016 was to save our identity. They had written about this

historic legislative Assembly election in Assam that had traditionally been a Congress bastion for several decades. It was a watershed moment that opened the door for the party to the political corridors of the North-east. They being the political campaigners for the BJP in the North-east, went behind the scenes to provide an insider's account of what fashioned this first-ever landslide victory for the BJP in the state, detailing the political contours and highlighting the issues that had been dogging the region for a long time. The Battle of Saraighat was fought in 1671 between the Ahoms of Assam and the Mughal invaders. In 2016, the BJP centred its strategy for the legislative assembly elections on this historic battle, focusing on issues of illegal migration, constantly invoked in the party's rallies, posters and communication to appeal to the voting public. In this book, they outlined the political history of the region, provided details of election strategies employed by the party and explained why they resonated with the local people so strongly. The Last Battle of Saraighat looks at Assam as a case study to explain the rise of the BJP in the North-east and throws light on the key political issues of the region. The authors had likened this decisive battle of the Ahoms to the 2016 Assembly elections in which the people of Assam voted against the "demographic, cultural and political aggression of the illegal Bangladeshis threatening the essence of the state".

Parshany Jha (2017)[22] narrated that barring a hic-cup or two, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party chief Amit Shah, had been winning election after election since its 2014 Lok Sabha poll win. After the historic victory, the BJP won assembly elections in Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur and Uttar Pradesh. In Haryana, Assam and Uttar Pradesh, the BJP formed governments on its own while in Jammu and Kashmir it tasted power for the first time with the state's Peoples Democratic Party. In Manipur also, the party formed its government with

the help of some junior allies. However, the BJP lost heavily in Delhi in 2015 against Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party and in Bihar against Nitish Kumar-led Grand Alliance of Janata Dal-United, Rashtriya Janata Dal and Congress. That it managed to break the alliance and formed the government with Nitish Kumar is a different story. In the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, it was the first time in the 67-year history of independent India that a non-Congress party won a simple majority on its own. The author described in detail how the BJP transformed itself into a more inclusive Hindu party, open to all castes, which led to its victory in Uttar Pradesh despite the risky decision of demonetisation. On the future of the BJP, the author explained how "Modi's mass charisma and Shah's tremendous organisational skills together laid the foundations for the new BJP in the middle of its most ambitious experiment of social engineering". Apart from these two main factors, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) — the BJP's mentor —supplemented and contributed to its phenomenal success. The author contended the relationship between Modi and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat was smooth, citing it as one of the reasons for the BJP's success and a key factor that did not exist during the time of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and then RSS chief K C Sudarshan.

Ashutosh Varshney (2002)[23] drew on new research on Hindu-Muslim conflict in India to address what kinds of civic ties between different ethnic communities could contain, or even prevent, ethnic violence? He examined three pairs of Indian cities—one city in each pair with a history of communal violence, the other with a history of relative communal harmony—to discern why violence between Hindus and Muslims occurs in some situations but not others. The author focused on the networks of civic engagement that bring Hindu and Muslim urban communities together. Strong associational forms of civic engagement, such as integrated

business organizations, trade unions, political parties, and professional associations, are able to control outbreaks of ethnic violence. Vigorous and communally integrated associational life can serve as an agent of peace by restraining those, including powerful politicians, who would polarize Hindus and Muslims along communal lines. It is an outstanding study of ethnic violence through systematic, comparative analysis. Varshney developed a compelling explanation of why Hindu-Muslim violence has occurred in some Indian cities and not in others. The work provided the most comprehensive data on communal riots in India and was a fascinating attempt at disaggregating the national scenarios by comparing local situations.

Kingshuk Nag (2015)[24] traced the political journey of this tall parliamentarian of over four decades, who was conferred the Bharat Ratna in December 2014. From being one of the earliest members of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Vajpayee blossomed into a leading opposition MP by the late 1960s, went on to become External Affairs Minister in the short-lived Janata government and, finally in 1999, to head the first non-Congress government to complete a full term in office. That it was a coalition government made the feat all the more remarkable, and testifies to the fact that though wedded to a right-wing political ideology, Vajpayee did not believe in the politics of exclusion.

A protégé of Jana Sangh stalwarts, Vajpayee won the admiration of Jawaharlal Nehru, was consulted by Indira Gandhi whom he never lacked the courage to criticize and befriended by fiery trade unionist George Fernandes even before they became political allies. He thus displayed an unusual ability to carry along all shades of political opinion,an ability that came to the fore when he headed the National Democratic Alliance government between 1999 and 2004. And behind this public persona was an unusual personal life, conducted with such dignity as to

remain free of innuendo. The author started with "...For Aman Ki Asha, the cause of peace and harmony between India and Pakistan that Atal Bihari Vajpayee tirelessly strove for..." and digs deep into the man and his life that is admired by everyone. The author provided some very interesting insights into a number of unknown facets of Atal Behari Vajpayee. His relationship with the RSS and its Chiefs are quite revealing. The author offered insights in some of the unknown facets of his life. Most strikingly his strained relation with his alma mater RSS (he came in contact with it as early as 1940) when K.S Sudarshan was the Sarsanghchalak. Many times he was at the receiving end of both RSS & it's affiliate organisations like V.H.P due to his moderate and liberal approach. Here was a man who had no enemies, including Pakistan, but was eloquent in his criticism whenever he felt strongly about an issue. He praised even his adversaries. Despite being a severe critic of many policies of Nehru, he termed Nehru as an "honest man who was never afraid of negotiation and never negotiated with fear".

Achin Vanaik (2017) [25] restated his concern about the rise of Hindu communalism, under the changed circumstances of an incumbent BJP government that won an absolute majority in the 2014 parliamentary elections. The author had substantially expanded and revised from a 1997 study, argued that to properly understand why and how the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Sangh Parivar had risen to where they are in India today, we need to critically re-evaluate the claims made about the virtues of Indian secularism and of its historical emergence. In the necessary battle of ideas, mainstream liberal discourse did not sufficiently counter Hindutva because both share some common ground regarding India's 'civilizational durability', and how the nexus of religion (primarily Hinduism) and culture has shaped today's social order. The author argued that, "…the longer-term battle to defeat communalisms and fundamentalisms must be waged on the terrain of civil

society, where the democratic process must be stabilised and secularisation deepened". He believed in the continued secularisation of Indian life, something that was imminent but not linear or smooth within the capitalist mode of development in an immensely diverse country. The author sought to theoretically rebut such perspectives, advocating not just strengthening the secularity of the Indian state but promoting greater secularization of civil society. The Sangh Parivar is a far right force, whether seen as fascist or fascistic, that has longstanding, cadre-based roots in civil society and is determined to bring about a Hindu rashtra. This would mean a Hindu state in all but name, the permanent inferiorization of certain religious minorities, severe curtailment of rights more generally, the monitoring and isolation of those who would oppose by words and actions the forces of Hindutva. Since the conditions enabling this trajectory are not just cultural but materially grounded in the current iniquities of economic, social and political life in the country, to defeat this communalism we have to fight against much more than communalism, namely against the neoliberal order generating these conditions. Even as all those opposed to Hindutva need to work together for their own sakes, for the building of an Anti-Neopliberal Platform, the revitalization of the Left in India is vital. For Vanaik, secularisation is the antidote to the spread of vicious Hindu communalism. He said, "Hindutva is the intellectual anchor of the ideology pursued by the most vicious form of Hindu nationalism, which is itself a major part of the overall project of Hindu communalism".

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To study the Indian electoral politics and the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from the early 1980s.

2.To analyse the ideology, organization, leadership, electoral base and also the hindutava doctrine of BJP in the Indian polity.

3. To find out the causes of the weakening of the Congress party and its effects on the rise of the BJP.

4. To explore the broad contours and conditions of Indian electoral politics and explore how its evolvement over the years has affected the fortunes of the BJP.

5. To find out as to what extent Hindutava, Shiv Sena Party and RSS contributed in the rise of Bhartiya Janata Party in Indian politics.

6. To study the dynamism of Indian democracy where regional political parties have become active players as to decide who governs the centre.

Hypotheses of the study

Some of the tentative hypotheses of the study are:

1. Hindu nationalist agenda had sparked a major change in Indian society and government and Hindutava revolved around the rise of Bhartiya Janata Party.

2. The rise of the BJP was facilitated by the weakening of the Congress party due to the rise of a multi-party system providing opportunities to the regional parties to enter national electoral politics.

3. Indian electoral politics has undergoing a transformation from a single party (Congress) dominant electoral system to a multi-party system and again with single dominant party (BJP).

4. The Congress, although much weakened, is still a national party to be reckoned with. Indian electoral politics cannot be fathomed without studying the role of Congress and its legacies.

5. The rise of Bhartiya Janata Party is due to the charismatic leadership and organizational skills of the leaders.
6. The performance of BJP in relation to its stated goals specifically in the field of centre-state relations, foreign and defence policy, economic reforms, curbing corruption etc. have enhanced its stature in Indian politics.
7. In terms of strong and expanded organizational structure, pragmatic leadership and electoral success on pan-India basis, the BJP has emerged from cadre-based party to a cadre-base mass party.

Research Methodology

For the completion of this study the data would be mainly concentrated on textual approach. While conducting study on The Role of Bhariya Janata Party in the Electoral Politics of India Since 1980 the researcher would examine the various original works, documents of the party, press statements of the party leaders etc. Besides books written by eminent scholars, and articles and research papers published in national and international journals of repute would be consulted. Thus both primary and secondary sources would be used for the completion of this study.

Chapter Scheme

The study is divided into six chapters:

Chapter I: Introduction.
Chapter II: General introduction to Indian electoral politics.
Chapter III: The weakening of the Congress party and its electoral implications. This includes structural, political, economic and societal factors responsible for the decline of the Congress Party in the Indian electoral politics.

Chapter IV: The rationale behind the rise of the BJP in Indian electoral politics. Was it due to Hindu nationalism or the liberalization of the Indian economy from the early 1990s.

Chapter V: The most recent developments of Indian electoral politics. To analyze the interaction between the two main national parties, the BJP and the Congress, and to explore the potential implications of the new Indian electoral politics on Indian politics in general and on democracy.

Chapter VI: Conclusions and Suggestions.

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